

On Becoming a Global Village

Multicultural Curriculum in Adventist Schools

- *An elementary teacher in an all-white school in Iowa attempts to sensitize her third graders to the problems of other cultures. She devises a controversial experiment creating blue-eyed and brown-eyed "subcultures" within her classroom.*

- *A high school teacher helps his students organize a trip to rural Dominican Republic. The students' cultural horizons expand as they work alongside the local townspeople in a construction project.*

- *A college professor in a small Nebraska town negotiates a way to send his teacher-education students to inner-city areas so that they may learn the skills necessary for teaching in culturally diverse settings.*

By Paul S. Brantley

What do these teachers have in common? Each has sensed the importance of helping students understand and appreciate other cultures. The world is rapidly shrinking in size yet growing in diversity. Consequently, all the students in Seventh-day Adventist schools should be provided with opportunities for cross-cultural understanding within a church whose mission encompasses "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Moreover, children and youth at every stage of social development profit

Multicultural education, appropriately organized, is crucial for social as well as spiritual development.

from broadening experiences that help them discard the egocentrism of childhood in preparation for adult life. Multicultural education, appropriately organized, is crucial for social as well as spiritual development.

When it comes to multicultural education, the Seventh-day Adventist system of education has a number of advantages. As a worldwide church, Adventists sponsor one of the largest, most culturally diverse systems of formal religious education. Informally, members are ever made aware of other cultures through such experiences as Sabbath school mission reports, Ingathering projects, overseas missionary talks, and meetings such as General Conference sessions that bring together diverse groups of people. Seventh-day Adventists have a large

number of structured and unstructured opportunities to learn about other cultures. However, these opportunities must be carefully planned in order to be successful.

Although individual teachers similar to those described above are free to teach multicultural concepts in individual classrooms, the essential question is, *What opportunities and experiences are included within the approved curriculum to ensure the exposure of every student in every Adventist school to a better understanding of other cultures?* What content and learning activities routinely comprise the curriculum of Adventist schools so that multicultural education is not left to chance?

Defining Curriculum

Classroom planning is important, but *curriculum* is a more general plan for guiding learning experiences in school systems. Curriculum is not a single entity, however. The *recommended* curriculum is the initial rationale advocating what is to be taught. When the recommended curriculum is converted into a document for teacher use it becomes the *written* curriculum. What teachers actually teach becomes the *taught* curriculum, and what students learn constitutes the *learned* curriculum. The *tested* curriculum is designed to assess what students have learned. This article examines various phases of curriculum in terms of what is being done and what might be done to expand opportunities for multicultural education in Adventist schools.

The Recommended Curriculum

The Bible and Ellen White's writings

provide a rationale for including multicultural concepts in the curriculum. Christ's injunction to His disciples was to go "into all the world, and teach all nations." From its earliest years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has enthusiastically spread the gospel. A knowledge of languages and diverse cultures greatly enhanced the work of early missionaries such as J. N. Andrews.¹

Ellen G. White makes the following statement in the book *Education*:

To awaken in the children and youth sympathy and the spirit of sacrifice for the suffering millions in the "regions beyond," let them become acquainted with these lands and their peoples. In this line much might be accomplished in our schools... Let them study all lands in the light of missionary effort and become acquainted with the peoples and their needs.²

Within the North American Division, various recommendations have been voted to respond to this challenge. The NAD *Frameworks*, upon which the written curriculum in North America is based, recommends multicultural approaches in such subject areas as history, languages, Bible, and English.

One of the most recent statements recommending greater cross-cultural understanding is the "Position Statement on Human Relations"³ adopted by the NAD Curriculum Committee in 1985. Designed to guide policy and practice in North American schools, this statement includes concrete recommendations.

The Written Curriculum

In recent years, both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the world at large have made greater efforts to include multicultural education throughout the curriculum. Criteria used by curriculum committees at the union and division levels include sensitivity to cultural differences. The SDA Basic Readers, adapted from the Scott, Foresman and Company series in 1969, featured multiethnic illustrations. The more recent Life Reading Series not only use illustrations from various ethnic groups (see Table 1), but also include biographies and other thematic reading material from a wide spectrum of cultures.

Criteria for Textbooks

Implications for multicultural education extend far beyond simply including illustrations of different racial groups in textbooks, however. In selecting textbooks⁴ and other written curriculum materials educators would do well to ask the following questions:

1. Does the treatment of cultures in the curriculum encourage stereotyping? Focusing exclusively on a single group may have the unintended effect of reinforcing separation and segregation.

Implications for multicultural education extend far beyond simply including illustrations of different racial groups in textbooks.

2. Is the treatment of cultures interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from such subjects as Bible, social studies, fine arts, and language arts? Multicultural treatment across the curriculum provides integrated wholeness rather than piecemeal attention.

3. Do the reading and interest levels of curriculum materials address persons from minority cultures so as to enhance their feelings of self worth? This does not imply "watering down" the curriculum, but providing success opportunities in the curriculum for persons who do not fit into the cultural mainstream of the larger society.

4. Does the curriculum provide for practical, hands-on experiences? Ellen White writes,

Instead of burdening their [students'] memories with an array of names and theories that have no bearing upon their lives, and to which, once outside the schoolroom, they rarely give a thought, let them study all lands in the light of missionary effort and become acquainted with the peoples and their needs.⁵

The burden of our Adventist pioneers was acquaintance with other cultures in order to share the good news of God's love. Portions of the curriculum that call for service permit superb opportunities to learn about other cultures.

The Taught Curriculum

The teacher to a great extent *is* the curricula. He or she should demonstrate to students both formally and informally an appreciation of other cultures. If the teacher is narrow and provincial, students

will learn to be intolerant; if the students see a teacher who is curious and enthusiastic about other cultures, their own cultural horizons will be expanded.

Educators need preparation to implement multicultural concepts just as they need preparation for other components of teaching. This training needs to take place in both preservice and in-service education. *Curriculum topics should include listening skills, self-awareness, and appreciation of and sensitivity to cultures different from one's own.* Teachers should be shown concrete ways to teach multicultural concepts effectively. Each school library should be stocked with an array of materials on various cultures to support planned classroom activities.

Helping teachers become more sensitive to multicultural elements is a challenging and continuous process that requires ongoing support and encouragement from supervisors and administrators. As teachers learn to treat students humanely, the winners are not only ethnic minorities. In a real sense, each student is a minority of one, and each benefits from a more humane classroom environment.

The Learned Curriculum

This phase of the curriculum is the most difficult to manage. Formal classroom instruction comprises only a portion of what students learn. Much of a student's knowledge and appreciation of other cultures is derived from the "hidden curriculum." This includes the distortions of the mass media and the prejudices expressed at the dinner table. Schools often offer both negative and positive experiences, particularly on the bus and playground.

Although the school cannot control all the forces that shape the learned curriculum, it can make a concerted effort to shape student experiences. If administrators, pastors, teachers, and constituency exhibit and support positive attitudes toward other cultures, a "hidden curriculum" can be created at school. Then formal studies can combine with cocurricular activities and incidental learning to create a total environment, and the

Table 1
Life Reading Series
Proportion of Illustrations Depicting Persons From Ethnic Minorities

Grade	Illustrations Including Minorities	Total Number Illustrations	Percent
2	193	272	71%
5	86	150	57
8	49	103	47

recommended curriculum will become the learned curriculum.

The Tested Curriculum

In many parts of the world, tests drive the curriculum. Unfortunately, tests generally assess objective knowledge more effectively than attitudes. Curricula based on these are therefore much more likely to include objective knowledge than to stress attitudinal or behavioral change. A system of education based

Educators must insist on evidence that students are changed as a result of exposure to a multicultural curriculum.

on the gospel of love to God and service to the world, needs more comprehensive measurements of curriculum outcomes.

One would usually assume that a student who has been educated in schools that are sensitive to a variety of cultures will exhibit the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors taught as a part of the curriculum. But educators must insist on evidence that students are changed as a result of exposure to a multicultural curriculum.

Continued on page 43

POSITION PAPER ON HUMAN RELATIONS

AS WRITTEN BY

THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE TASK FORCE

Paul S. Brantley, Chairman

Benjamin Bandiola

E. Stanley Chace

Charles Felton

Eloy Martinez

WHEREAS the North American Division Curriculum Committee (NADCC) has commissioned a task force to formulate a human relations position statement designed to guide policy and practice in the North American Division system of education K-12, the Human Relations Task Force has formulated the following Position Statement for NADCC endorsement:

WE RECOGNIZE that the educational process involves complex interactions between individuals—students, parents, teachers, administrators, and constituents;

WE RECOGNIZE that the complexity of these interactions may create problems in human relations that interfere with the harmonious development of the physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional dimensions of the individual;

WE RECOGNIZE and acknowledge the existence of human relations problems as indicated by, but not limited to, the following:

1. Changing racial composition of the schools as a result of changes in the ethnic make-up of constituent supporting churches.

2. Inadequate provision made by our K-12 schools to acculturate persons from non-English backgrounds into full participation in school life.

3. Valuing, with an inflated sense of superiority, one's own religious, regional, cultural, age, sexual or economic group over persons of other groups.

4. Ambiguity on the part of S.D.A. educators as to whether S.D.A. education should pursue as its goal moving all persons toward a single, unified culture

("melting pot"); allowing for diverse but complimentary cultures (cultural pluralism); or encouraging the isolation of diverse cultures (separatism).

5. Excluding students from economically depressed homes from full participation in school life.

6. Discriminating against persons with special personal handicaps and/or physical attributes.

7. Isolation of individuals into polarized and exclusionary racial or ethnic sub-cultures.

8. Verbal abuse, slurs, and personal vendettas between and among students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

9. Subtle teacher attitudes and behaviors such as non-verbal mannerisms, biased perceptions and expressions, preconceived teacher expectations, and other dispositions which alienate and estrange.

10. Cliques and friendships which unduly exclude and isolate others.

11. The challenge of children from single-parent families and broken or deteriorating homes.

WE FURTHER RECOGNIZE the following philosophy of human relations which should undergird policy and practice in NAD schools:

Seventh-day Adventist educators believe that the ministry of reconciliation involves more than the one-time historical incarnation of the Word and His subsequent death on Calvary, justifying the sinner and entitling him to eternal life in the hereafter.

We believe that it involves the daily incarnation of that Word into the lives of individuals resulting in a life-long process

of the restoration of the image of their Creator producing more abundant life in the here and now. This is redemption, the object of education.

Consequently, any act of commission or omission by which we deprive fellow human beings of their fullest development in this life diminishes the degree of that restoration of the Divine image and thwarts the purposes of Divine redemption.

WE, THEREFORE, ARE COMMITTED to the ideal that K-12 educators within the North American Division should develop a fuller recognition and appreciation of the dignity, worth, potential, aspirations and contributions of individuals and groups, and seek more positive ways of bringing such into full Christian fellowship.

WE ARE COMMITTED also to helping K-12 educators discover and eliminate those attitudes, policies, and practices, which demean, isolate, or inhibit individuals or groups from participating in the full Christian fellowship.

WE ARE COMMITTED further to K-12 educators increasing their appreciation and respect for the God-given diversity among His children—diversity among both individuals and groups. While acknowledging this diversity we acknowledge also and promote the common culture found in Christ—unity in diversity.

WE ARE COMMITTED to the idea that all objectives planned and activities implemented within this educational system are appropriate only as they enable students from any culture to survive in the larger society and thrive within the fellowship of Christ.

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Continued from page 7

How we deal with language in our schools often indicates to pupils our view of their culture. To teach students to be sensitive to other cultures, we must recognize and accept the languages or dialects spoken in their homes or communities.

Through our attitudes, materials, and interactions, we will assist students to maintain and extend their identification with and pride in their mother culture and, by extension, in other cultures with which they come in contact.

Developing multicultural awareness and sensitivity can be an exciting journey of discovery for both teacher and student. The articles in this issue of the JOURNAL offer some ideas to help you embark upon this journey with your students. □

Janice Watson is Assistant Professor of Communication and English at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. She has taught language and culture at English Language Schools and privately in Zaire and in the U.S. She serves as a consultant in intercultural communication and has conducted workshops on intercultural/interethnic relations and communication for faculty on the college and secondary school levels as well as for community and professional groups such as foreign student advisers. A member of the Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research, she teaches a class in cross-cultural communication at Andrews University.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brislin, Richard W., et al. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1986.
- Casse, Pierre. *Training for the Cross-Cultural Mind: A Handbook for Cross-Cultural Trainers and Consultants*. Washington, D.C.: Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, 1981.
- Gudykunst, William B. and Young Yun Kim. *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. New York: Random House, 1984.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959.
- Pusch, Margaret D., ed. *Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach*. Yarmouth, Vt.: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1979.
- Samovar, Larry A., et al. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ David S. Hoopes and Margaret D. Pusch, "Definition of Terms," in *Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach*, Margaret Pusch

ed. (Yarmouth, Vt.: Intercultural Press, 1979), p. 3.

² In the majority culture in North America, acceptable behavior in an elevator requires that the passengers face the front of the elevator, where possible, and look at the door or the floor indicator. One may discuss the floor, the building, or the weather with strangers in the elevator although this is discouraged. Raising personal subjects is unacceptable.

The working unit of time differs from culture to culture. "The working unit for the Euro-American is the five-minute block. An individual can typically be two or three minutes late to a meeting without apologizing. After five minutes, however, a short apology is expected. Being 15 minutes late, representing three units of time, requires a lengthy, sincere apology, or perhaps a phone call in advance." —Richard W. Brislin, et al., *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1986), p. 272.

³ Hoopes and Pusch, p. 4.

⁴ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (1976), pp. 26, 27.

⁵ Carl George, "Challenges Facing Adventists," *Adventist Review* (January 5, 1989), pp. 17-19.

⁶ See *Harvest '90; 125th Annual Statistical Report—1987*, compiled by the General Conference of SDA Office of Archives and Statistics, Washington, D. C.

ON BECOMING A GLOBAL VILLAGE

Continued from page 12

riculum. The questions listed below suggest ways to determine whether students are becoming more culturally aware:

1. Are students "multiculturally literate"? Do they show in conversation that they understand the main characteristics of their own heritage as well as the heritage of others?

2. Do students from various cultures express feelings of self-worth? Do they participate fully in the life of the classroom and school? Do they make disparaging statements about themselves or their peers that reflect poor self-esteem? Are students ashamed of or uninformed about their own cultural backgrounds?

3. Do students demonstrate openness and tolerance for persons from other groups and cultures? Are they inclusive in their choice of friends? Do they try to make persons of other cultural groups feel comfortable in the classroom or on the playing field?

4. Do students stereotype or generalize? Can they distinguish between myths and factual information? Do they identify cultural bias and distortions?

5. Are students able to work cooperatively with others of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in performing a variety of tasks? Do they share their faith with others in the larger society who come from different backgrounds?

The tested curriculum in this case consists of information primarily gathered through observation, as opposed to standardized written tests. The answers

can be used to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Adventist education approaches a new millennium in a time of unprecedented social and cultural change. What better legacy could it give to rising generations of students than the ability to understand the many diverse cultures that constitute a rapidly shrinking world? The curriculum in Adventist schools must be continuously examined to ensure that every student becomes multiculturally sensitive and literate. With students prepared in this way, "how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!"¹⁶ □

Dr. Paul S. Brantley is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He taught church school in the Southern United States, the urban Northeast, and migrant education in the rural Midwest before serving as a teacher educator at Oakwood College and Andrews University.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ Kenneth Wood, "P.S. on John N. Andrews," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (March 20, 1975), p. 2.

² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1903), p. 269.

³ Paul S. Brantley, Benjamin Bandiola, E. Stanley Chace, Charles Felton, and Eloy Martinez, "Position Statement on Human Relations," adopted by the North American Division Curriculum Committee (Washington, D. C.: North American Division Office of Education, 1985).

⁴ California State Department of Education, *Guide for Multicultural Education Content and Context* (Sacramento, Calif., 1976), pp. 6, 8.

⁵ *Education*, p. 269.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Continued from page 36

customs attached to the second language helps the student to comprehend the nuances of particular words and phrases.

9. Ensure parental education. This does not mean that the teacher of a mainstream classroom must spend time outside of school hours to teach the target language to the parents of the student. It does mean that the parents should be informed of the complexities inherent in second language learning, so their expectations will be realistic and achievable. Visiting the parents in their home environment can be helpful if the teacher seeks to make the parents comfortable about the visit, and does not convey a demeaning attitude.

10. Be aware of the nonverbal com-